

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 512

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 8533

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GH

SUBJ: ACHEAMPONG ANNOUNCES COUP PLOT FOILED; AMNESTY PERIOD
EXTENDED

1. HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG IN MEETING WITH CHIEFS FROM VOLTA REGION
DEC 23 SAID THAT GOVERNMENT HAD UNCOVERED AND FOILED A COUP
ATTEMPT.

HE THUS CONFIRMED PUBLICLY WHAT HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR PAST SEVERAL
WEEKS, THAT A SCORE OR SO HAVE BEEN UNDER ARREST. MOST OF THOSE
ARRESTED ARE EWES. THE GROUP INCLUDES RETIRED AND ACTIVE MILITARY
OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN AND A FEW CIVILIANS. ONE ASSOCIATED
WITH PLOT IS NEPHEW OF NKRUMAH PERIOD FINANCE MINISTER GBEDEMAH,
ALTHOUGH SO FAR IT APPEARS HE HAS NOT BEEN IMPLICATED DIRECTLY
IN PLOT. ONE ALLEGED MASTERMIND, RETIRED BRIGADIER KATTAH HAS
MANAGED TO CROSS THE BORDER INTO TOGO.

2. ACHEAMPONG ALSO TOLD CHIEFS THAT OFFER OF AMNESTY TO THOSE
INVOLVED IN "ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE STATE" (READ MEMBERS OF TOGO
LIBERATION FRONT) HAD BEEN EXTENDED TO THE END OF JANUARY. HE
IMPLIED WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN, THAT FEW HAVE AVAILED THEMSELVES OF
OFFER.

3. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO REASSURE EWES (IT CAN BE ASSUMED ALL THE
CHIEFS PRESENT WERE EWES) ACHEAMPONG SIAD NO ONE WAS ARRESTED OR
TIRED ON BASIS OF EITHER TRIBE OR PREVIOUS POLITICAL AFFILIATION
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BUT SOLELY ON GROUNDS OF PLOTTING AGAINST GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED

THAT SEVERAL TRIALS IN SMC-NRC PERIOD HAVE BEEN HELD AND THAT THEY COVERED A WIDE SPECTRUM OF TRIBAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO MEANS BY WHICH TO JUDGE WHETHER OR NOT A SERIOUS PLOT EXISTED AND JUDGING FROM THE LEVEL OF ALLEGED MEMBERSHIP IT SEEMS UNLIKELY ANY PLAN COULD HAVE SUCCEEDED. NONE-THELESS IT DISPLAYS AGAIN THE UNEASINESS WITH WHICH ACHEAMPONG WEARS HIS CROWN. AN INTERESTING POINT IN THIS INSTANCE IS THAT THE EWES INVOLVED, SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, ARE FROM THE PART OF THE VOLTA REGION WHICH WAS UNDER BRITISH DIRECT RULE AND NOT FROM THE BRITISH TOGOLAND AREA WHICH DECIDED BEFORE INDEPENDENCE BY A PLEBISCITE TO JOIN GHANA. PREVIOUSLY MANY ALLEGED PLOTTERS HAVE BEEN FROM THE AREA AROUND HO WHICH DISAPPROVED THE MERGER IN THE PLEBISCITE (MERGER PROPOSAL WAS CARRIED NONETHELESS AS THE NORTHERN PORTIONS OF BRITISH TOGOLAND VOTED HEAVILY IN FAVOR AND CANCELLED THE HO AREA NEGATIVE VOTES.
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